

**"ON THE WING."**

Observations ought to be as helpful as lucubrations. What the editor sees on his flights perhaps interests himself most, but he is not a whole-souled editor if he is not trying to see for others as well.

An earlier street car than we were wont to take showed us a different set of toilers. There got on a sweet-faced woman, in widow's dress. Everything indicated a very recent bereavement, but resolution and patience were written in every feature, while gentleness and refinement manifested themselves in face, apparel and manner. A plain little package in her hand carried a frugal lunch. She got off opposite one of the great marts where hundreds of women work. It was not hard to believe that she had taken up the burden of her own and others' support. Perhaps, as in cases we have known, three or four little children were left behind,—one of them eleven or twelve years old,—in sole charge of the plain two-room nest and its birdlings, till she should come back at the close of the day. God bless the brave little mother!

The gay young people at yonder end of the sleeper who kept everybody awake last night did not think as much as they ought. That might have been passed by, though there is no reason why mere youth should excuse want of thought. But not so their loud-mouthed talk of being "off for a good time," their utterly foolish denunciations and ridicule of the "dryness" of the prohibition State through which we were passing, and still less their drinking beer and whiskey which one nineteen-year-old youth, the leader of the bevy, passed around, even to the sixteen or seventeen-year-old shop girls who were loudest in the laughter at the folly of closing the saloons. Poor, silly girls!

The train was awhile ago rolling through the most majestic mountains. For a score of miles the scenery was condensed, as it were, in splendor. We were sweeping through a great canyon, a huge cleft in nature's masonry, a roaring mountain stream now on one side and now on the other, lesser streams dashing down the mountain side, here and there, to join the great river, jagged masses of God-painted rock on either side, an occasional glimpse through a side gorge of more distant mountains; no wonder the passengers crowded the windows and platforms. But not all. One dear old lady over there, serious and business-like, has just finished lunch with her traveling companion, a mature son, as we enter the gorge. She has never been here before, but ignoring all the excitement and the exclamations of everybody around her, she placidly gathers up the fragments of the lunch, calmly arranges and wraps them, neatly repacks her two big pasteboard boxes, covers them and carefully puts the cords about them to keep them in shape. Not one glance does she give to the sublimity of nature's grandest work. "Though on pleasure bent, she had a frugal mind!" Dear frugal old soul!

Our good friends, the Associate Reformed people, do not seem to be inclined to respond to our warm-hearted though yet informal overtures on union. And yet they think and preach and act just as we, and we just as they. We are one in every way but outward connection. We sat and listened yesterday with

exquisite pleasure to their best known evangelist. He preached with all the orthodox and old-fashioned conservatism of the most "moss-backed" amongst us, and withal with such fervor, in such earnestness of soul and manner, and in such vividness and clearness and power as to make us wonder that any man present could resist his appeals. He sang vigorously the good hymns which were used in the meeting, and once asked for still another. Why not come to us, brethren, and let us be one in name and effort as we are already one in faith, in testimony, and in ways!

A day, there, is a mere taste of that glorious "retreat," Montreat. Shut in by the great mountains on either side and at the end, in a huge cove, densely wooded, made musical by the tinkle of scores of cascades in the bold stream at the bottom, watered by hundreds of the coldest springs, it is yet close to the world's highway. The charm of it is found not so much in the quaint and beautiful cottages embowered in the woods and rhododendron, and clinging to the mountain sides, nor yet in the deliciously cool and pure air, nor yet in its invitation to explore the adjacent heights, nor yet in the thrice daily lectures, musicales, "method-study" meetings, "movements" and the like in the auditorium, but in the rich company gathered there and the happy companionship of kindred souls. The day we spend there, we counted thirty-nine Presbyterian preachers without beating the bushes and finding all. And they tell us that it was not a particularly good day for preachers, either! We should like to visit Montreat again on a day that is up to the average or above it! Where will they put them? But they say that there is always room for more. Then go, by all means! You will never regret it.

**PROBLEMS.**

Unquestionably there are numerous difficulties and there is mystery involved in our holy religion. There is scarcely an important truth in the entire system which if regarded in all its bearings and traced toward its high source and its ultimate significance, does not involve us in heights and depths which we can not explore. The mystery of regeneration which our Master expounded; the awe-inspiring balancing of mercy and justice in our justification; the processes of the divine Spirit in sanctification; the over-mastering fact of sonship in the family of God; inwrought repentance and faith and love, the purification of motive and affection, the illumination of the intellect by divine energy—these all are high; we can not attain unto them, anticipation of the heavenly life, its boundless and endless joys, its employments, our enlarged powers, our new glorified thought planned on a vaster scale—these all fill us with wonder as they charm us by their prospect.

But how remarkable and how gratifying it is that mystery, or unattained comprehension does not repel in the Spiritual realm, but rather inspires and attracts. We reflect that the unknown in Spiritual truth is so because it is too vast, or high, or refined for our finite and exceedingly circumscribed vision. The element therefore of attraction and promise prevails and we are thrilled by the very knowledge that unknown and, for